

Overall Satisfaction with Employment Services Provided During the Job Ready Phase: How Much Influence Does Current Employment Status Have?



Surveys and Research Staff
Office of Performance Analysis and Integrity
Veterans Benefits Administration

Prepared by Ronda Britt
May 2003

Introduction

Using data from the 2002 “Survey of Veterans Satisfaction with the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program: Job Ready Phase”, this report examines the influence of current employment status on a veteran’s overall satisfaction with the employment services provided **once they were declared job ready***. The Job Ready phase survey was conducted between December of 2002 and February of 2003, and was sent to the total population of veterans who were in the Job Ready phase as of August 2002 or who had been deemed rehabilitated within the previous four months.

Intuitively, whether or not the veteran has reached the rehabilitation goal of finding suitable employment would seem to be a key influence on their satisfaction with the employment services provided once they were job ready. However, as these charts will show, their satisfaction is also closely related to the level of counselor involvement in the job search, which happens to vary significantly between those who are employed satisfactorily (meaning they are not looking for a different job) and those who are not.

The charts will detail how the counselor’s assistance during the job search, their overall helpfulness in finding the veteran’s current job (if they have one), and whether or not they monitored the veteran’s job search progress are all related both to the veteran’s current employment status and their overall satisfaction. The final chart provides an all-in-one look at the effects of both current employment and the counselor’s helpfulness on overall satisfaction in order to isolate the effect of each.

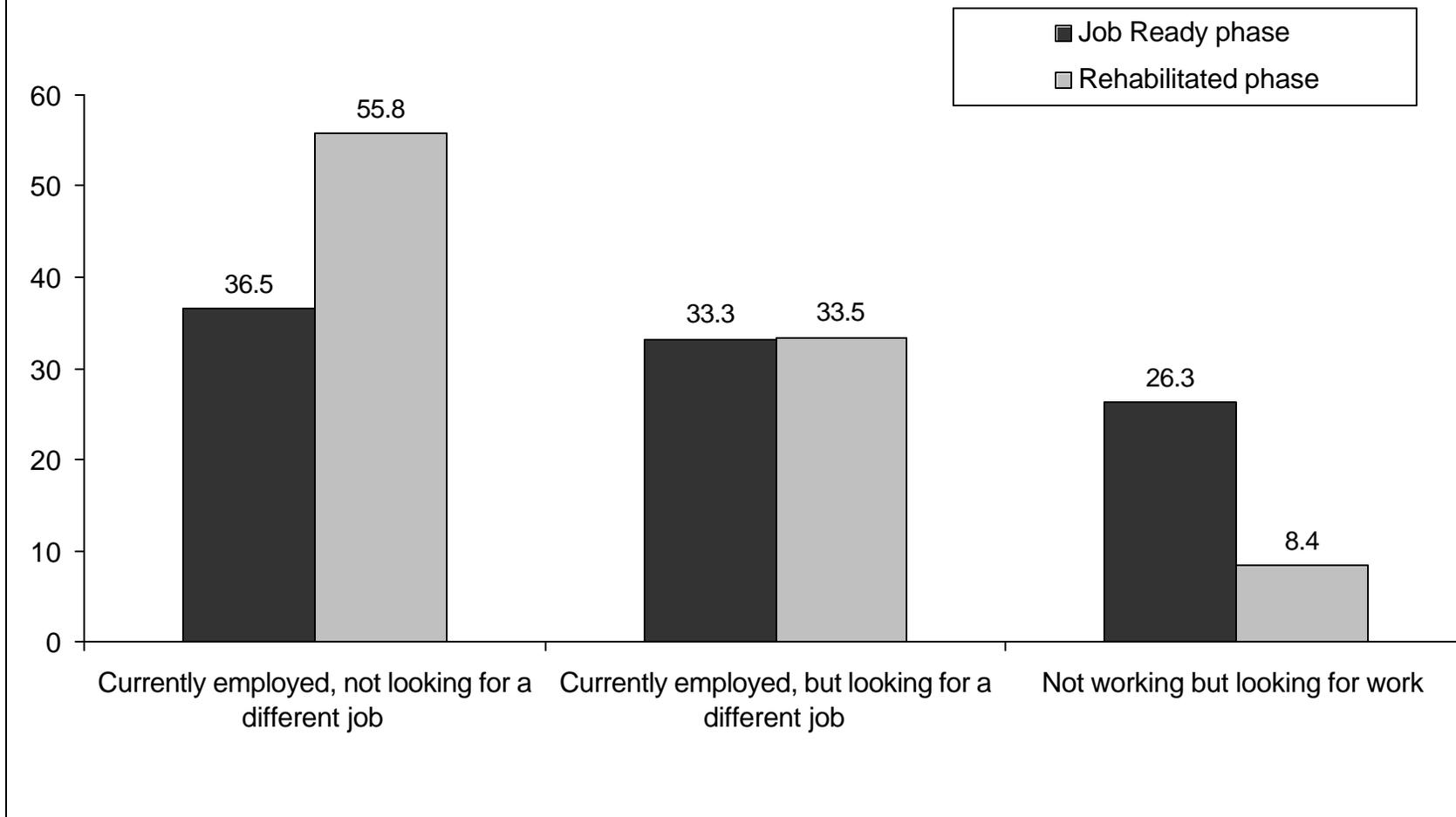
The veteran’s current employment status is asked at the end of the Job Ready phase questionnaire and gives four possible choices:

- 1) Currently employed, not looking for a different job
- 2) Currently employed, **but** looking for a different job
- 3) Not working but looking for work
- 4) Not working and not looking for work **

* The exact question wording was “After you completed your rehabilitation plan and became job ready, how satisfied are/were you overall with the services provided to assist you in obtaining a job?”

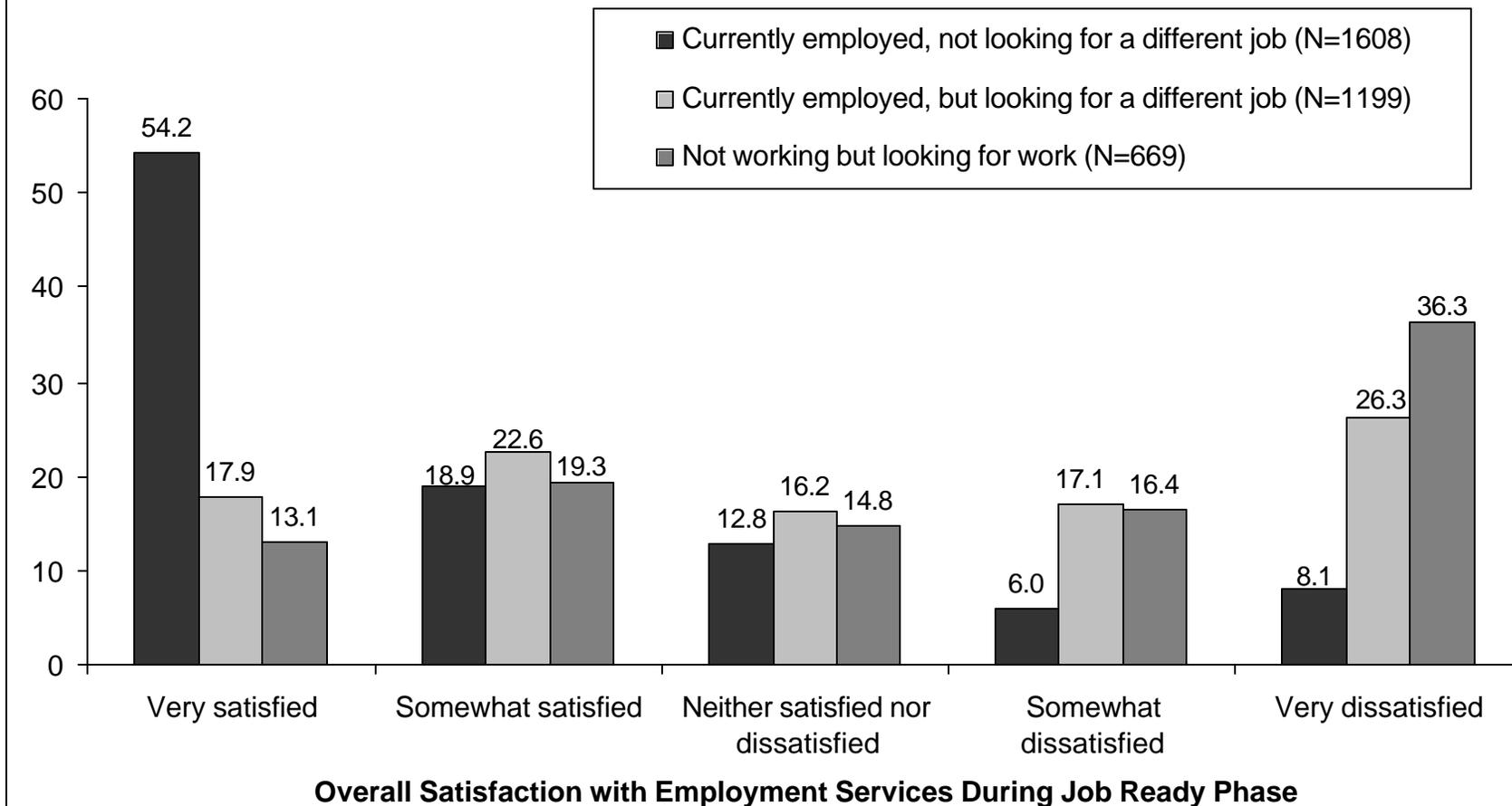
** This category will be excluded from the report due to the small percentage of respondents choosing it (3.2 percent), and because it is atypical of those who are in the job ready phase or who have just recently been deemed rehabilitated.

Current Employment Status by VR&E Program Phase



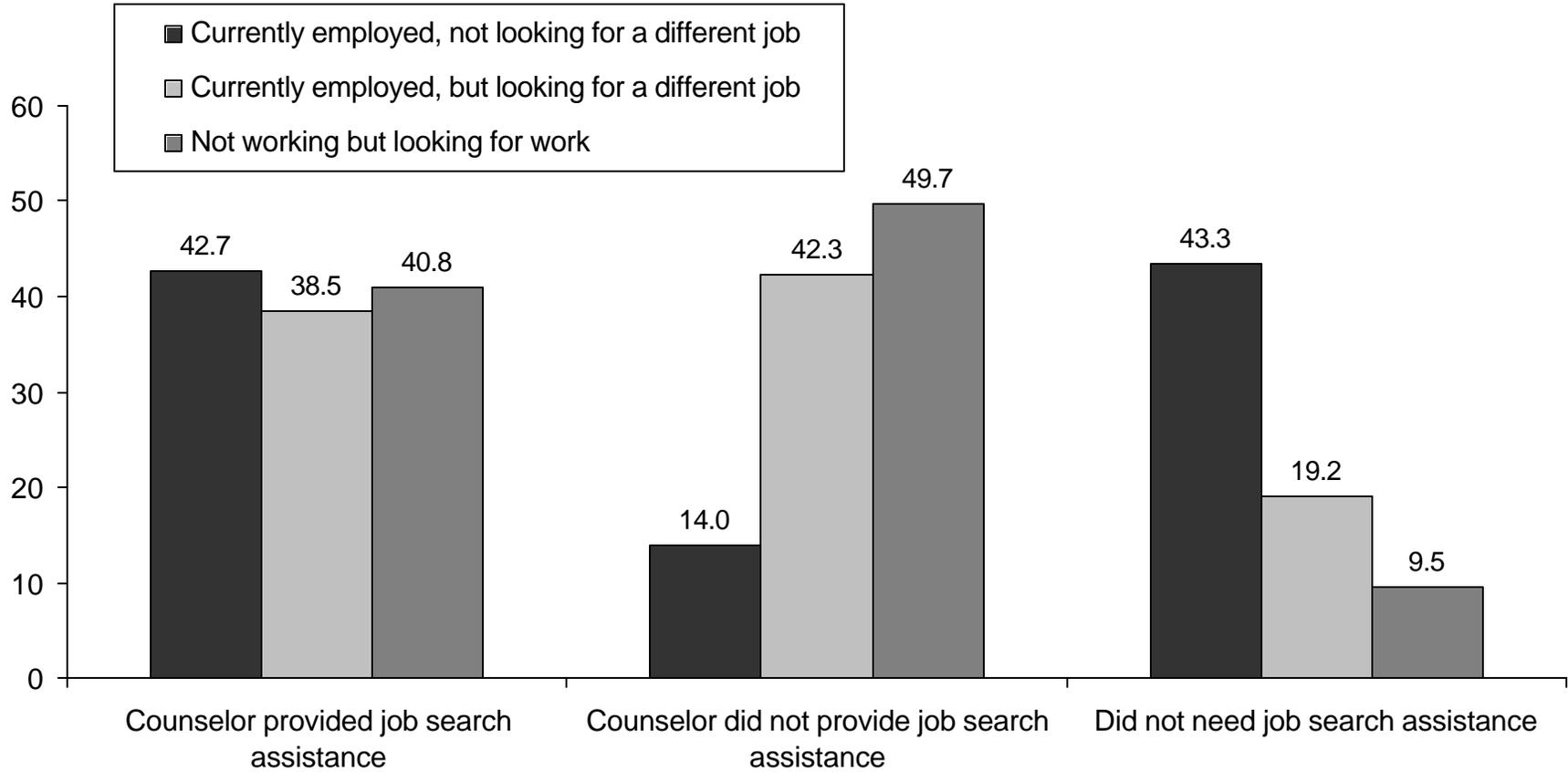
This first chart shows a breakdown of the respondents' current employment status by the program phase they were in at the time the sample was drawn. As expected, a higher percentage (55.8 percent) of those who had been declared rehabilitated reported that they were currently employed and not looking for a different job compared with those who were still in the Job Ready phase (36.5 percent). Interestingly, the same percentage from each phase (roughly 33 percent) were employed but looking for a different job. However, a full one-fourth (26.3 percent) of those in the Job Ready phase were not employed at all and looking for work, compared with only 8.4 percent of those who had been declared rehabilitated.

Overall Satisfaction with Employment Services During Job Ready Phase by Current Employment Status



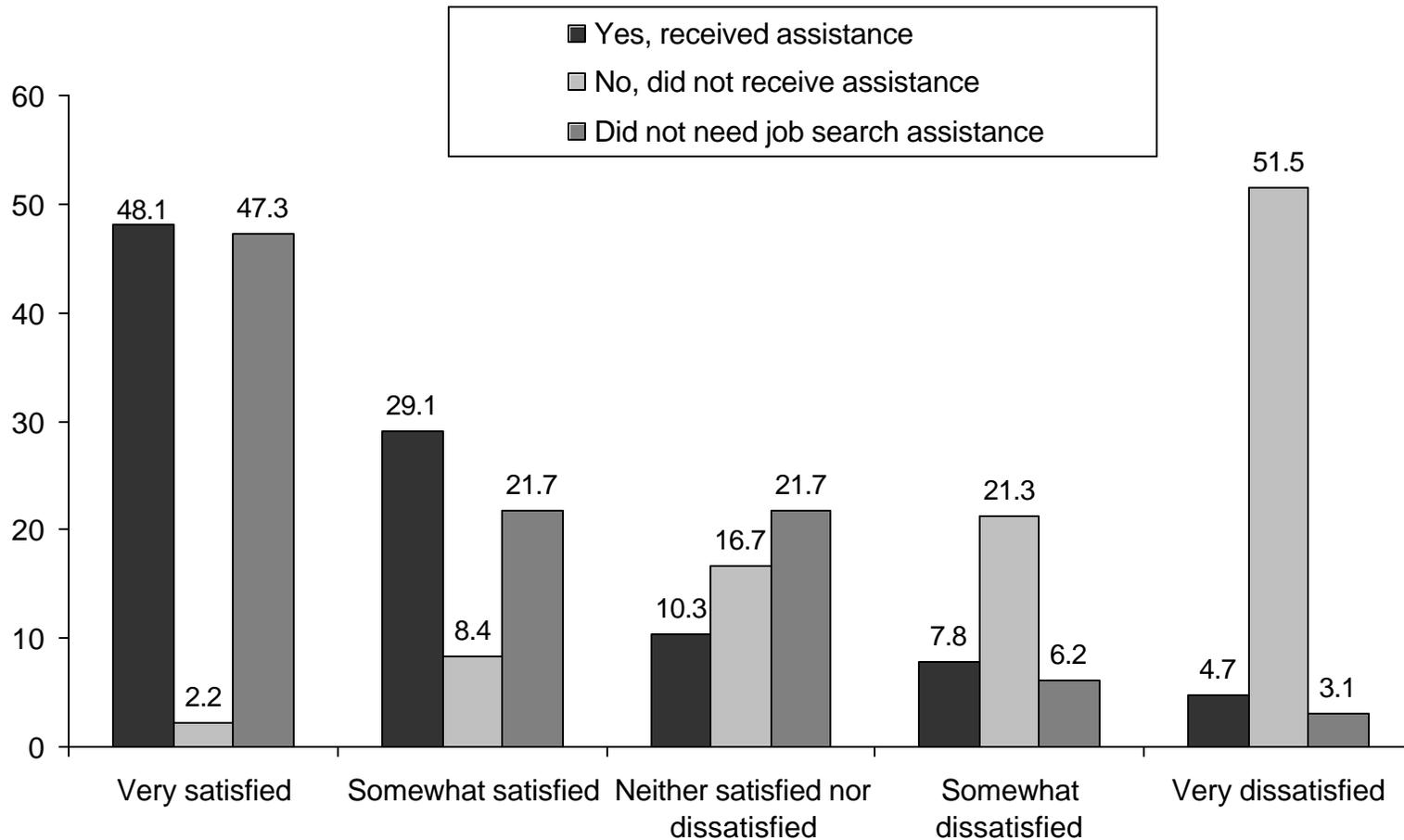
A significant predictor of overall satisfaction with the employment services received during the job ready phase was the respondent's current employment status. Of those who were currently employed and not looking for another job, over half (54.2 percent) were **very satisfied** with the employment services received, vs. only 13.1 percent of those who were currently not employed and looking for work.

Whether or Not Counselor Provided Assistance Throughout Job Search by Current Employment Status



This chart shows a distinct difference in the reported levels of counselor involvement between those satisfactorily employed and those still looking for a job. Of those who were currently employed and not looking for a different job, the majority stated that either the counselor provided job search assistance (42.7 percent) or that they had not needed job search assistance (43.3 percent). Only 14.0 percent said their counselor did not provide job search assistance when they needed it. A much higher percentage of those who said they were still looking for work, whether currently employed or not, reported that their counselor had **not** provided job search assistance (42.3 percent of those who were currently employed but looking for a different job and 49.7 percent of those who were unemployed and looking for work).

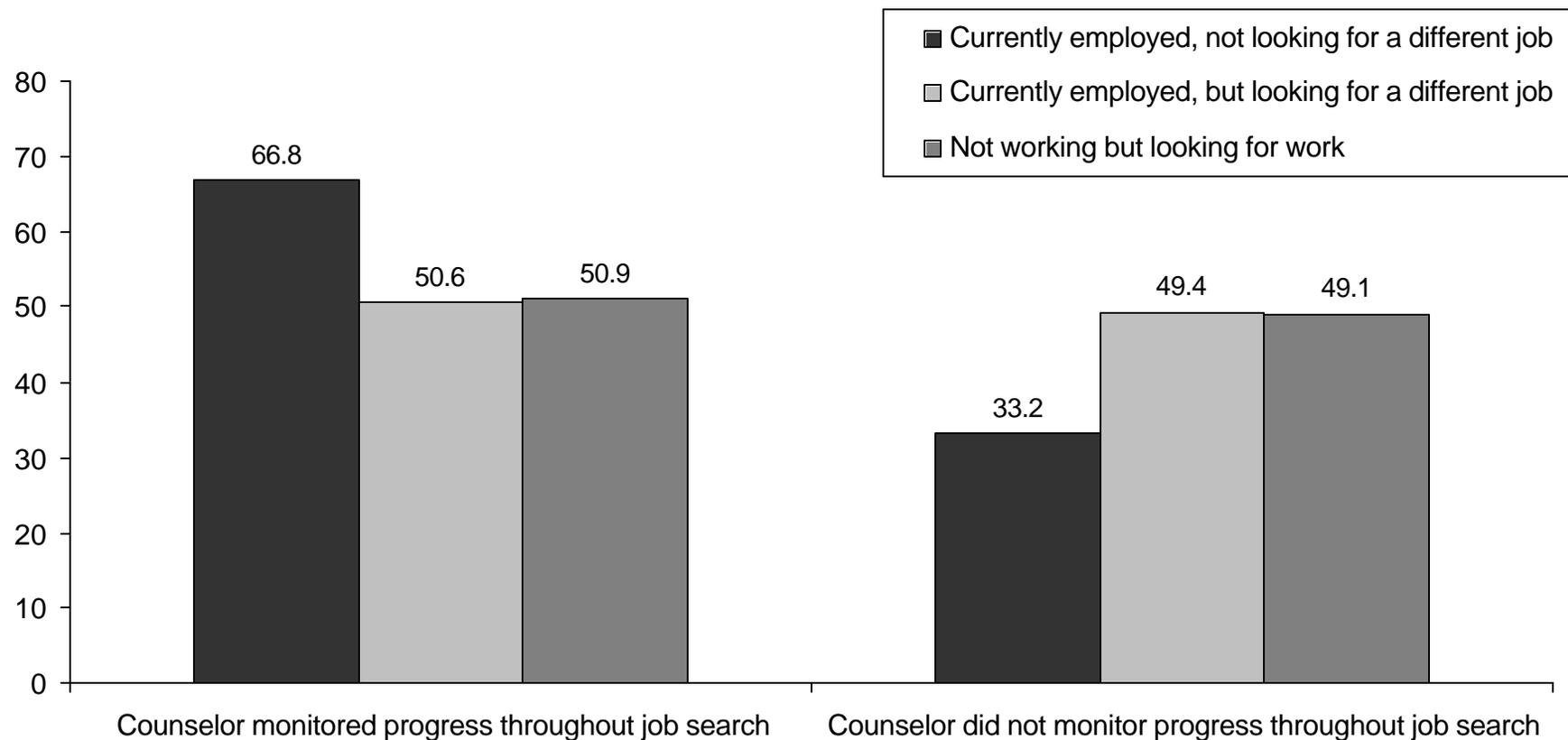
Overall Satisfaction with Employment Services Provided in Job Ready Phase by Whether Counselor Provided Assistance During Job Search



Overall Satisfaction with Employment Services During Job Ready Phase

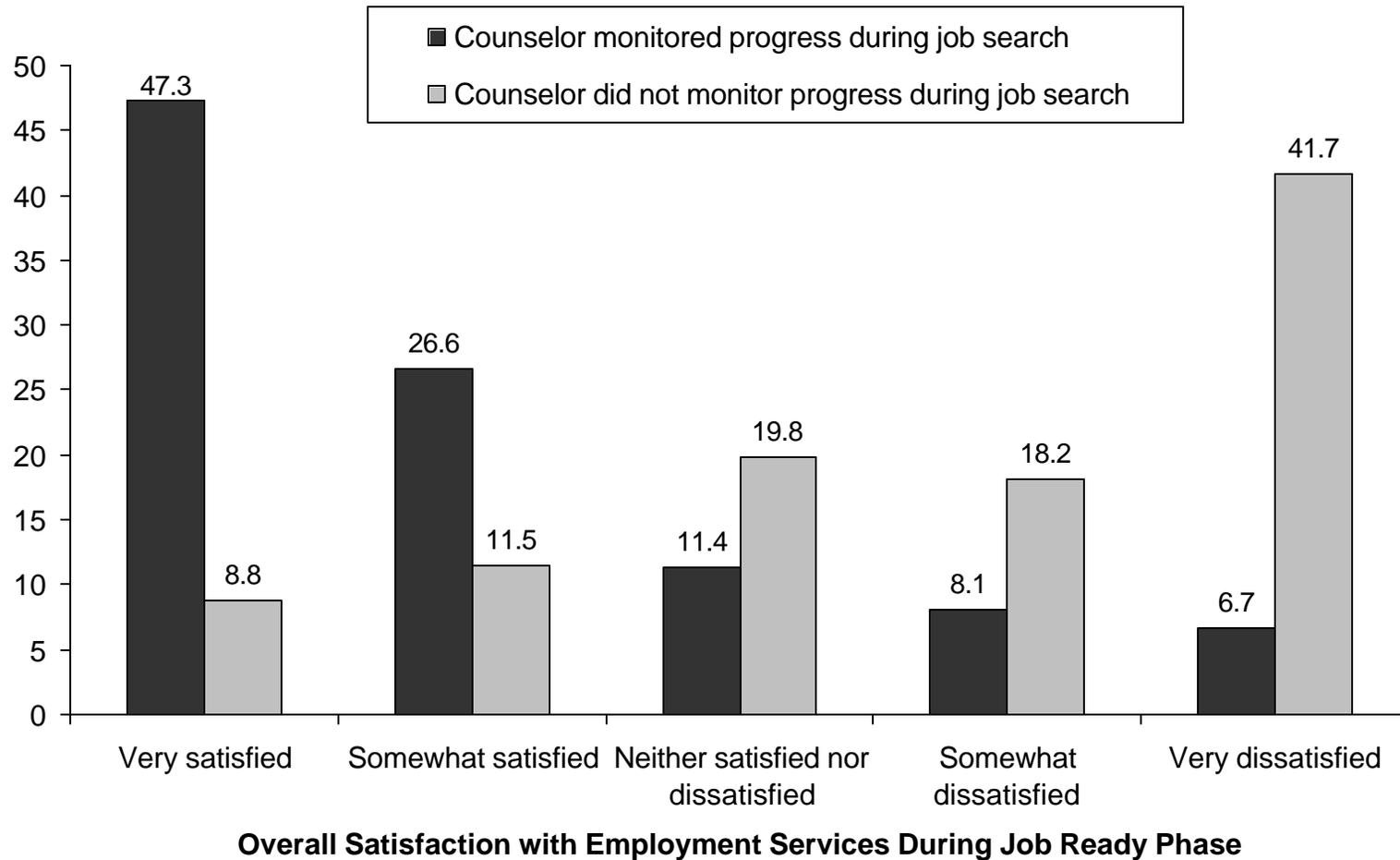
For those who stated that their counselor provided assistance throughout their job search or for those who said they did not need assistance, the overall satisfaction with employment services provided during the job ready phase was high (77.2 percent and 69.0 percent respectively). Those who felt they needed job search assistance from their counselor and did not receive it were by far the least satisfied, with only 10.6 percent very or somewhat satisfied with the employment services received.

Whether or Not Counselor Monitored Progress in Job Search by Current Employment Status



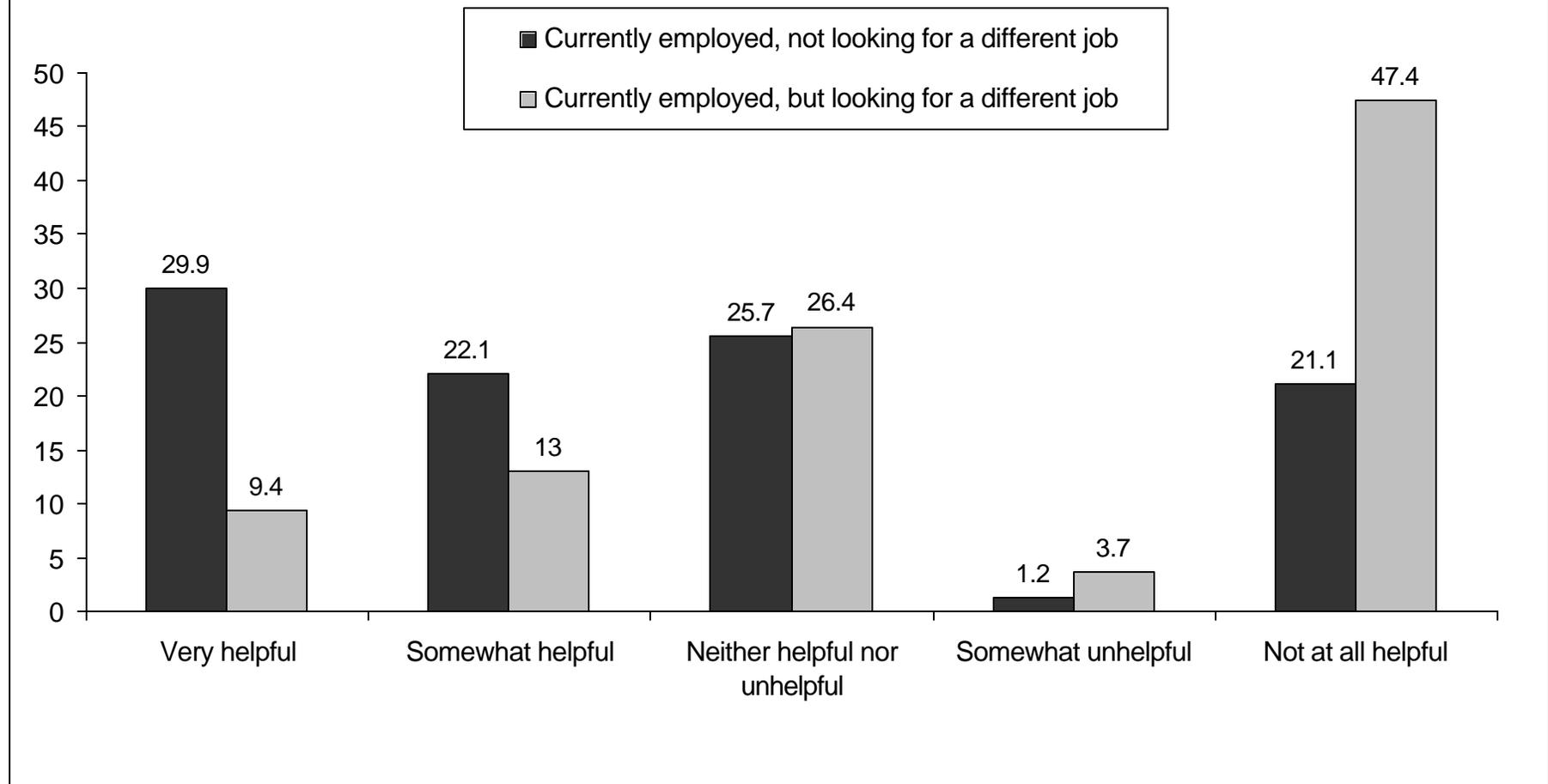
Almost half of all respondents who had not yet found satisfactory employment stated that their counselor did **not** monitor their progress during their job search, vs. only a third (33.2 percent) of those who were currently employed and not looking for a different job.

Overall Satisfaction with Employment Services Provided in Job Ready Phase by Whether Counselor Monitored Progress Throughout Job Search



Of those who stated that their counselor monitored their progress throughout the job search, 47.3 percent were **very satisfied** with the services provided to assist them in obtaining a job once they were job ready. This percentage combined with the percentage of those who were **somewhat satisfied** totals 73.9 percent, which greatly exceeds the national average of 52.1 percent. Conversely, 41.7 percent of those whose counselor did *not* monitor their job search progress were **very dissatisfied** with the employment services provided during the job ready phase.

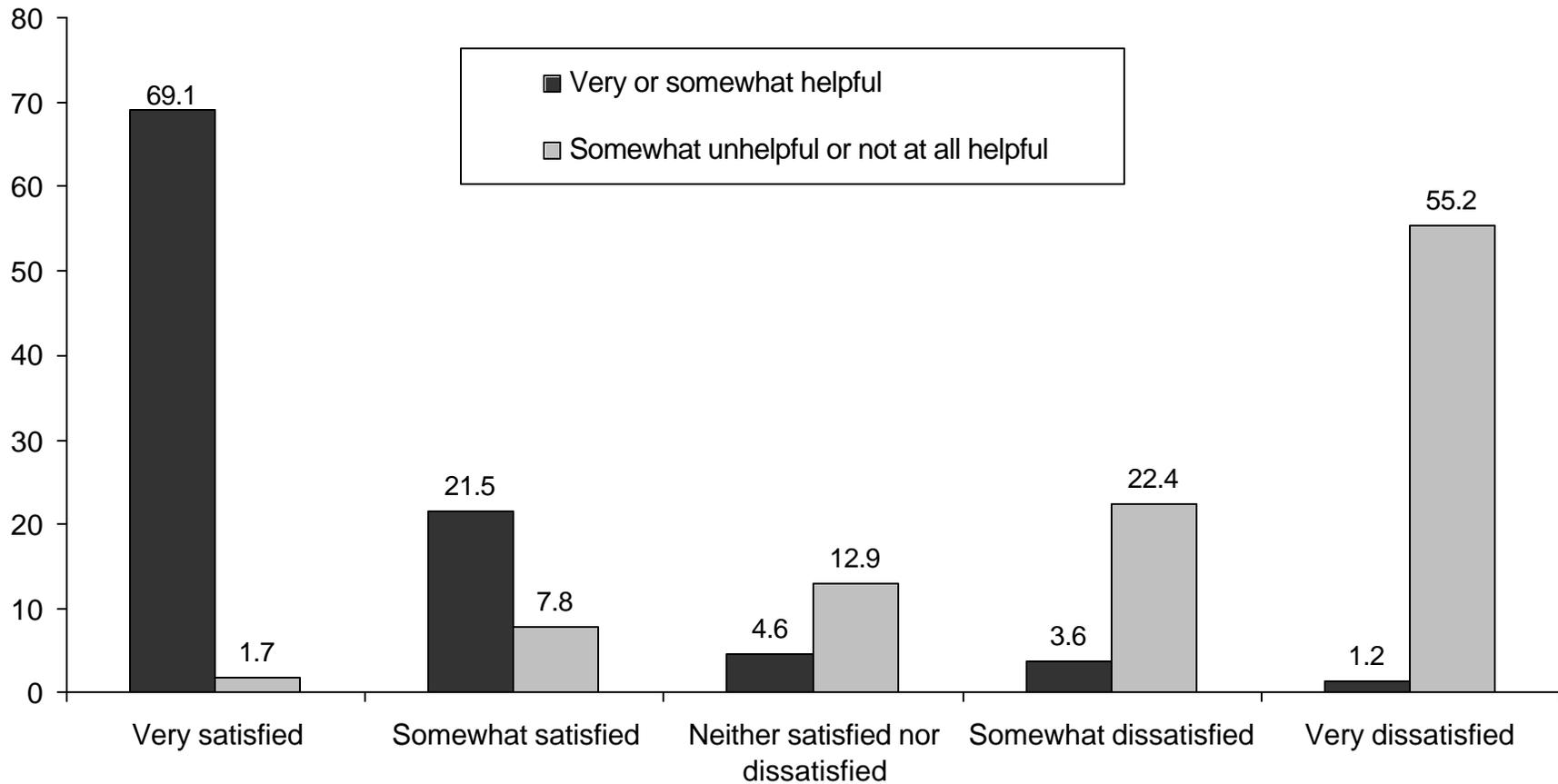
Helpfulness of Counselor in Finding Current Job by Current Employment Status



Respondents who had found satisfactory employment (currently employed, *not* looking for a different job) were over three times as likely to rate their counselor as **very helpful** in finding them their current job (29.9 percent vs. 9.4 percent of those who were looking for a different job).

NOTE: Category of “Didn’t need help” was not included in this analysis.

Overall Satisfaction with Employment Services During Job Ready Phase by Helpfulness of Counselor in Finding Current Job



Overall Satisfaction with Employment Services Provided During Job Ready Phase

For those respondents who were currently employed, those who stated that their counselor was very or somewhat helpful in finding them their current job were much more likely to report being **very satisfied** with the employment services provided during the job ready phase. An overwhelming nine out of ten (90.6 percent) of respondents who thought their counselor was helpful in finding their current job were **very or somewhat satisfied** with the employment services received, which is almost 40 percentage points higher than the national average of 52.1 percent.

Overall Satisfaction with Employment Services During Job Ready Phase by Current Employment Status and Helpfulness of Counselor



This final chart shows the overall satisfaction distributions of four specific categories of respondents, with the most satisfied being those who were currently employed, not looking for a different job, and who also felt their counselor was helpful in finding their job (79.3 percent very satisfied with employment services provided). Interestingly, the helpfulness of the counselor in finding the respondent’s current job has a greater impact on overall satisfaction with the employment services provided during the job ready phase than whether or not they were satisfied with their current job. The satisfaction of those who stated that their counselor was helpful was much higher in both cases (79.3 percent very satisfied of those not looking for a different job and 43.8 percent very satisfied of those who were looking) than those who said their counselor had *not* been helpful finding their current job (2.9 percent and 1.2 percent very satisfied).

* “Helpful” is defined as very or somewhat helpful; “Not Helpful” is defined as somewhat unhelpful or not at all helpful.

Conclusion

While the employment status of a veteran does have some influence on his or her overall satisfaction with the employment services provided, it is clear that a more important determining factor is whether or not the counselor was actively involved during the job search. It seems that despite the fact that some of the employment services provided during the Job Ready Phase are final preparations for the job search (e.g., help in developing a resume or teaching interview skills), veterans view job search assistance to be the most important service provided and rate their overall satisfaction with the services accordingly. A veteran who wanted assistance but whose counselor took a “hands-off” approach during the job search was much more likely to report dissatisfaction with the employment services provided. These veterans were also more likely to still be looking for satisfactory employment, suggesting that the counselor’s assistance during the job search can be crucial to a successful outcome.

This issue of counselor assistance was frequently mentioned in the write-in section at the end of the Job Ready Phase questionnaire. The following are excerpts of the comments provided by the veterans:

- “I was very disappointed with the process for finding jobs. I was surprised that there were no Federal/State job preferences or resources for people going through the program....I found my job through a temp agency, [I am] not at all happy with job assistance.”
- “I liked my counselor, but towards the end they kept changing my counselor around. Currently, I don’t even know who to call. As far as I know, no one has ever checked up on me as to my progress. I never received any help in looking for a job. I was told I would probably place myself.”
- “People really need more help than just the education part. Some of us need help with the job search. I myself was working the whole time I was in school. No type of job counselor called me at all. Now I’m trying to find another job on my own.”
- “I expected a lot more from the employment assistance portion of VR&E than I received. I had minimal contact with my employment counselor and the jobs that the employment counselor had leads to were off internet job searches that I could have done myself. Personally, I thought that the employment counselor should have had a better relationship with the actual employers in the area instead of relying mainly on internet job searches.”

Clearly, counselor assistance during the veteran’s job search has a significant impact on the overall satisfaction with employment services of those in or just completing the Job Ready Phase; the satisfaction level could be dramatically raised if counselors made sure they were providing the level of assistance the veterans need. This can be achieved by regular monitoring of the job search and building relationships with local employers in order to provide the veteran with realistic job opportunities.